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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4748  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2544  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2409  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2996  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
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SENSITIVE  
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SUBJECT: UNDP HELPS TURKMENISTAN DEVELOP CLIMATE CHANGE  
POLICY

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: United Nations Development Program (UNDP) recently facilitated an inter-ministerial dialogue on climate change, aimed at helping Turkmenistan develop an official position on the issue. UNDP hoped to gain a commitment from Turkmenistan that it would identify priorities in its climate change policy. During the inter-ministerial meeting -- organized at the initiative of Turkmenistan -- it was decided that electroenergy and the oil and gas sector were priorities on the mitigation side, and water -- in light of Turkmenistan's heavy use of irrigation methods in farming -- on the adaptation side. UNDP observed that participation came from a high level and from across a wide variety of ministries and agencies. Turkmenistan's liabilities in dealing with a global climate change mechanism are a lack of real negotiation experience and the lack of a "vocal regional organization." The UNDP representatives said Turkmenistan's per capita energy usage is high, and that they enjoy support from the highest levels of the government to help Turkmenistan develop a national climate change policy. A test of that support will involve whether the Turkmen government, notoriously reluctant to share any statistics, will allow international experts to measure emissions. END SUMMARY.

A FORUM TO DISCUSS NATIONAL POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

13. (SBU) On January 23, UNDP held a read-out meeting for the donor community about the inter-ministerial dialogue it organized on climate change, which took place in Ashgabat on January 21-22. UNDP briefers were Environment and Energy Programme Analyst, Anna Kaplina, and Regional Technical Advisor for Climate Change Adaptation for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Ketii Chachibaia, from UNDP's Bratislava office, and National Programme Officer for Environment and Energy, Rovshen Nurnmuhamedov, from UNDP's Ashgabat office. UNDP organized the inter-ministerial meetings as part of the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy/Environment and Energy Group project that aims to strengthen developing countries' capacity to develop policy options for addressing climate change across sectors. This process will provide inputs to negotiating positions for

conventions, such as the Kyoto Protocol or other agreements that will succeed the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012.

Nurnmuhamedov said that the inter-ministerial provided a forum to discuss Turkmenistan's position on climate change in advance from the next UN Climate Change Conference of Parties meeting (COP 15), which will take place in Copenhagen on December 7-18, 2009, as well as to obtain a commitment from Turkmenistan that it will identify priorities in its climate change policy and move toward implementing mechanisms.

#### TURKMENISTAN IDENTIFIED KEY SECTORS FOR PROJECTS

14. (SBU) Kaplina stated that Turkmenistan was one of 19 countries that approached UNDP at a previous COP for assistance with addressing climate change. Kaplina added that UNDP did not approach countries with offers of assistance, and that countries needed to approach UNDP. Turkmenistan decided during the inter-ministerial that electroenergy and the oil and gas sector were priorities on the mitigation side, and water -- in light of Turkmenistan's heavy use of irrigation methods in farming -- on the adaptation side.

#### PARTICIPATION FROM HIGH LEVELS AND WIDE RANGE OF AGENCIES

15. (SBU) The UNDP representatives noted that key ministers attended the opening of the meeting. High-ranking officials such as department heads from non-essential stakeholder ministries and agencies such as the State Committee on Statistics, Ministry of Education, and the Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development also attended.

ASHGABAT 00000134 002 OF 003

Project participants submitted a set of recommendations at the conclusion of the meeting. UNDP felt that this high level of engagement was an indication of the importance that the Turkmen government places on climate change policy.

#### TURKMENISTAN LACKS NEGOTIATION EXPERIENCE

16. (SBU) The UNDP representatives also said that they discussed with GOTX participants the financial incentives of involvement in various climate change mechanisms, such as carbon finance. UNDP wants countries to understand how to position themselves for negotiations in the post-Kyoto Protocol period. Kaplina and Chachibaia said that Turkmenistan's particular liabilities are a lack of real negotiation experience at this level, and the lack of a "vocal regional organization." While Turkmenistan in comparison to countries such as Brazil is not at risk for becoming one of the world's highest carbon emitters, Kaplina and Chachibaia said they would like Turkmenistan to take responsibility for reducing emissions in the oil and gas sector and said that Turkmenistan should be aware at the very least of the benefits of various mechanisms.

#### NEXT STEPS: METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

17. (SBU) Next steps include a nine-month assessment phase, during which international consultants will run training programs in-country on climate change mitigation. Kaplina and Chachibaia expect that this work will generate methodological analysis. In addition, Turkmenistan is in the process of developing the Second Communication on Climate Change, which is supposed to be completed by May, but in all likelihood won't wrap up until the end of 2009. Kaplina and Chachibaia said that that all of Central Asia -- including Turkmenistan -- is vulnerable to falling far behind other countries in climate change work because acknowledgement of the need for and concrete steps towards climate change projects have not taken place at the national level. In addition, per capita energy usage is high -- in fact, Central Asian per capita energy usage is higher than in Brazil and China. UNDP recommended that Turkmenistan develop synergies between the Montreal Protocol, the Kyoto Protocol, and a post-2012 framework.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES -- REALISTICALLY?

18. (SBU) UNDP staff were optimistic that Turkmenistan will continue to address climate change and in time will consider mechanisms. Kaplina and Chachibaia said that there is increasing interest in and awareness of projects among Turkmen gas staff, with support of top management. Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in Turkmenistan, Inita Paulovica, said that the Ministry of Nature Protection will soon establish a National Designated Authority, who will serve as a point person for carbon finance projects. She mentioned that UNDP had hoped that Turkmenistan would have identified a National Designated Authority last year. UNDP is in the process of organizing a delegation comprised of international and regional advisors for this purpose -- at the request of Deputy Chairman for Foreign Affairs Rashit Meredov -- which will make Turkmenistan eligible for carbon finance projects. Paulovica predicts that this will also facilitate endorsement of a national climate change policy by Turkmenistan's Cabinet of Ministers.

19. (SBU) COMMENT: The process of getting Turkmenistan to develop a national policy for climate change reflects the challenges of cooperating with Turkmenistan more generally: lack of experience, lack of knowledge, and a preference for working with multilateral organizations. Paulovica emphasized Deputy Chairman Meredov's support for developing a climate change policy, but the rubber will meet the road once international experts request hard data from the government. Kaplina and Chachibaia already know -- without statistics --

ASHGABAT 00000134 003 OF 003

that Turkmenistan's per capita energy usage is higher than the highest per capita usage countries in the world. Turkmenistan is well-known for its reluctance to share statistics, so supplying -- what will be for Turkmenistan -- "embarrassing" information to the UN will be painful. END COMMENT.  
MILES